

## **Tennessee Access to Justice Commission Member Biographical Information:**

### **Margaret Behm, Chair:**

Margaret Behm began her legal career in 1976 at the Legal Aid Society. She then teamed with Marietta Shipley in 1980 to form Shipley and Behm, Nashville's first all-woman law firm. In 1994, she was appointed by the Speaker of the House to the Tennessee Judicial Selection Commission and served as its first Chair and a member for ten years. In 2006, she was named as one of three finalists to become Attorney General. Presently, she is Co-Chair of the committee which secured Nashville's bid for the Women's Final Four in 2014. Behm is a partner in Dodson Parker Behm & Capparella P.C., where her practice concentrates on employment, business law, commercial litigation, bankruptcy and estate planning. She serves as General Counsel to the Metropolitan Development Housing Agency and the Metropolitan Transit Authority. She has taught legal writing, trial advocacy and ethics and professionalism at Vanderbilt University for more than a decade. She currently serves as a member of the Board for the Girl Scouts of Middle Tennessee. She served on the Board for the Metropolitan Health Department from 1999 to 2008 and served on the Board of the Federal Home Land Bank of Cincinnati from 1996 to 2002. Ms. Behm's advocacy has been lauded locally and nationally. She has been the recipient of the Nashville Bar Association's John C. Tune Public Service Award, the YWCA Women of Achievement Award and the Athena Award. She has also received the prestigious Margaret Brent Women Lawyers of Achievement Award, given nationally to five lawyers a year by the American Bar Association.

### **Douglas Blaze:**

Professor Doug Blaze who received a J.D. summa cum laude degree from Georgetown University, was appointed Dean of the University of Tennessee College of Law in 2008. He joined the faculty in 1993 as Director of Clinical Programs. He has also been a member of the law faculty at Arizona State University where he helped establish a community-based legal service clinic and practiced with the firm of Fennemore Craig also in Arizona, where his practice involved both commercial and tort litigation. Professor Blaze is a member and former chair of the Board of the Tennessee Alliance for Legal Services and is also very active on various bar committees including the Tennessee Bar Association Access to Justice Committee and the Knoxville Bar Association Access to Justice Initiative. Through the National Institute for Trial Advocacy, Professor Blaze conducts trainings in professional skills for law firms and legal service organizations around the country including trial skills training for Tennessee's legal service program advocates at the annual Statewide Equal Justice Conference. Professor Blaze has received numerous honors and awards, including the prestigious Thomas Jefferson Prize from the University of Tennessee; the Bass, Berry & Sims Award for Outstanding Service to the Bench and Bar; the Harold Warner Outstanding Teacher Award, and the Carden Institutional Service Award. And for his efforts to promote equal access to justice in Tennessee, Professor Blaze received the B. Riney Green Award in 2003.

**Kathryn Reed Edge:**

Katie Edge is a member of Miller & Martin PLLC, in the Nashville office and concentrates her practice in the area of financial institutions law. She has served in many capacities for the Tennessee Department of Financial Institutions, including: Deputy Commissioner; Assistant Commissioner and General Counsel; and Assistant Commissioner, Safety and Soundness Division. She is a frequent speaker and lecturer on banking issues, legal ethics, gender and ethnic fairness issues, and lawyer impairment. She is a former President of the Tennessee Lawyers' Association for Women; Corresponding Secretary and Editor for the Lawyers' Association for Women; and held a number of offices for the Tennessee Bar Association (TBA), including early service on the TBA Access to Justice Committee. She eventually served as the TBA's second woman president. She was appointed by the Governor as a member of the Post-Conviction Defender Commission. She has served as a board member for the Tennessee Legal Community Foundation and the Tennessee Bar Foundation, serving additionally as the Foundation's treasurer and on its Grant Review Committee. Ms. Edge served on a special committee of the Tennessee Supreme Court charged with drafting rules to establish the Tennessee Lawyer Assistance Program Commission and was appointed co-chair of the Court's Commission on Gender Fairness. She has also worked with the Legal Aid Society of Middle Tennessee and the Cumberland for many years and has served in many positions, including: President; Treasurer; and chairman for the Society's fund raising campaign. She has also worked with many other nonprofits, including: the Community Care Fellowship; the Neighborhood Justice Center; and the Center for Nonprofit Management.

**Francis S. Guess:**

Francis S. Guess serves as executive vice president of The Danner Company, a Nashville based investment and management firm with interests worldwide; he serves as the firm's principal officer, provides management and marketing advice, and as the company's chief spokesperson. He holds a Masters of Business Administration from Vanderbilt University's Owen Graduate School of Management and completed the program for Senior Executives in State and Local Government at Harvard University. Mr. Guess entered the private sector after a career in public service, having served in two cabinet-level positions during Governor Lamar Alexander's term in office, as Commissioner of Labor and Commissioner of General Services. He also has been Assistant Commissioner of Personnel and held positions in the Tennessee Housing Development Agency and the Departments of Correction and Finance and Administration. Mr. Guess has also served thirty years as a member of the Tennessee Commission on Human Rights, having been appointed by both Republican and Democratic governors for successive six-year terms and served for six years as a member of the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights. He is a life member of the NAACP. Mr. Guess is currently serving on at least seven Boards and is the executive director of the Danner Foundation. He has served on some thirty or so Boards in the past. He has been the recipient of numerous awards and recognitions for his public and civic service and is a frequent speaker on issues pertaining to public policy, economic development, and civil rights.

**George T. (Buck) Lewis:**

Buck Lewis is a shareholder in the Memphis office of Baker, Donelson, Bearman, Caldwell & Berkowitz PC where he serves as chair of the Appellate Practice litigation group. He focuses his practice on complex business, personal injury, insurance coverage, Consumer Protection Act, health care and class action litigation. He is currently President of the Tennessee Bar Association and has made *Justice 4 All* the theme of his presidency, tirelessly promoting systemic changes; the adoption of law firm pro bono policies; and greater bar pro bono service and support for access to justice organizations across the state to help address the legal services gap. He has served as President of the Memphis Bar Foundation and as member of the Board of Directors of Memphis Area Legal Services and the America Bar Association House of Delegates; he is also on the Honor Role of the America Bar Association Torts and Insurance Practice Section. He is a Fellow of the Tennessee and Memphis Bar Foundations as well as the American Bar Foundation and a Fellow of the Litigation Counsel of America. He has been extensively honored for his public service work. He has been the recipient of: the Tennessee Supreme Court Outstanding Service Award; the University Of Tennessee College Of Law Outstanding Service Award; the Memphis Bar Association W. J. Michael Cody Pro Bono Award; and the University Of Tennessee College Of Law Alumni Leadership Award.

**Gregg Ramos:**

Gregg Ramos started his legal career as an Assistant Prosecutor for the City of Phoenix, but moved to Nashville in 1984. He is now a member of the law firm North, Pursell, Ramos & Jameson PLC in Nashville, where he maintains a general civil litigation practice with an emphasis in the areas of personal injury, employment law and workers' compensation. In 2006, Mr. Ramos was appointed by the Governor to serve on the Tennessee Workers' Compensation Advisory Council, a position in which he still serves. He was also a member of the Tennessee Supreme Court's Committee on Public Trust and Confidence in the Courts. He currently serves as well on the Tennessee Education Lottery's Advisory Council on Minority Business Participation. He was President of the Nashville Bar Association in 2004, and he is the immediate past president of Catholic Charities of Tennessee, Inc. and was named as Catholic Charities' Volunteer of the Year for 2008. Mr. Ramos is currently Board President of Conexión Américas and serves on the Board of Directors of the United Way of Metropolitan Nashville and the Tennessee Justice Center. He is on the Advisory Board of the American Constitution Society; a member of the Rotary Club of Nashville; and is part of the class of Leadership Nashville. Finally, Mr. Ramos was named by the Nashville Scene newspaper as the 2008 Nashvillian of the Year.

**D. Billye Sanders:**

Billye Sanders is a partner at Waller Lansden Dortch & Davis, LLP and concentrates her practice on administrative law, especially public utilities regulation, land use and state and local government relations. She also has experience with mergers and acquisitions, financial institutions and corporate transactional work. Her clients range from Fortune 500 companies and municipalities to start-up companies. Ms. Sanders has been recognized in the *Nashville Business Journal's* "Best of the Bar." Prior to joining Waller, Ms. Sanders served as Deputy General Counsel of the Tennessee Public Service

Commission. At the Commission, she managed the Legal Division; represented the public interest in public utilities litigation; and handled a variety of employment matters. Before joining the Commission, she served as Assistant Vice President and Legal Counsel for United Southern Bank of Nashville. Ms. Sanders is a Commissioner on the Metropolitan Davidson County Civil Service Commission, Chair of the Board of the General Alumni Association of Fisk University, Inc., member of the Board of Trustees of Fisk University, Board member of the Baptist Healing Trust and an Advisory Board Member of First Tennessee Bank. She is a member and former board member of Metropolitan Interdenominational Church, the Nashville Bar Foundation; Napier Lobby Bar Association; Lawyers Association for Women; Energy Bar Association; Leadership Nashville Alumni Association; CABLE and Vanderbilt Law School Alumni. She has also served on the boards of United Way of Middle Tennessee; Inroads Nashville; Nashville YWCA; Nashville Public Library and Nashville Public Radio. She is an emeritus member of the Harry Phillips American Inn of Court.

**Maura Abeln Smith:**

Maura Smith is senior vice president, general counsel and corporate secretary for one of Tennessee's largest corporations, International Paper, headquartered in Memphis. She also has responsibility for the company's global government relations. As the company's chief legal officer, she has continued the legal department's great tradition of supporting pro bono work and access to justice organizations through the Tennessee Bar Association's Corporate Counsel Pro Bono Initiative. Prior to joining International Paper in 2003, she served as senior vice president, chief restructuring officer, general counsel and secretary at Owens Corning, where she was also a member of the board of directors. She had been vice president and general counsel of GE Plastics, after being recruited from private practice where she was a partner in the law firm of Baker & McKenzie. She is a member of the Association of Corporate Counsel, the American Bar Association, the Florida Bar Association and the Tennessee Bar Association. She also serves on the General Counsel Committee of the National Center for State Courts. In addition to receiving her J.D. from the University of Miami School of Law which she attended as a John M. Olin Fellow in Law & Economics, she holds a Bachelor of Arts degree in economics from Vassar College and a Masters of Philosophy in economics from Oxford University, England, where she was a Rhodes Scholar.

**Dr. Frank Anthony Thomas:**

Dr. Frank Anthony Thomas is the Senior Servant of Mississippi Boulevard Christian Church in Memphis who speaks nationally and internationally, including engagements at the Calvin Institute of Christian Worship at Calvin Theological Seminary; Baylor University; Boston University; and the Morehouse School of Religion where he was inducted into the Martin Luther King, Jr. Board of Preachers. He has also served as a visiting lecturer at the University of South Africa and is known and respected for his preaching and teaching ministry at the "Under African Skies Conference" in Johannesburg, South Africa. Sermons by Dr. Thomas have been featured in *The African American Pulpit, Patterns of Preaching*, ed. Ronald Allen (Chalice Press 1999), and Pilgrim Press released *Atonement: The Million Man March* in 1996. He has served as an Adjunct Faculty member for the Doctor of Ministry in Preaching Program and the Master of Divinity Program at McCormick Theological Seminary in Chicago, Illinois and the

Memphis Theological Seminary. He holds a Doctor of Philosophy degree with a major in Communications from the University of Memphis; a Doctor of Ministry degree from Chicago Theological Seminary; a Doctor of Ministry degree in Preaching from United Theological Seminary in Dayton, Ohio; a Master of Divinity degree from Chicago Theological Seminary; a Master of Arts degree in African-Caribbean Studies from Northeastern Illinois University; and a Bachelor of Arts degree from the University of Illinois at Champaign-Urbana.

**Bill Young:**

Bill Young is the senior vice president of risk management and general counsel for BlueCross BlueShield of Tennessee in Chattanooga and reports directly to the chief executive officer. He provides legal counsel to the company as well as oversight of the corporate compliance program, internal and external audit, legal, corporate governance and compliance divisions. Prior to joining BlueCross in 2002, Mr. Young served as university counsel for Vanderbilt University in Nashville; general counsel for the Tennessee Hospital Association; president of the Hospital Alliance of Tennessee; deputy commissioner of the Tennessee Department of Commerce and Insurance; and senior counsel and assistant attorney general with the Tennessee Attorney General's Office. Mr. Young was also in private practice with firms located in Nashville and Washington, D.C. He currently serves on the board of directors of Park Center in Nashville and the Metro Chattanooga YMCA and is a member of BlueCross' Corporate Leadership Council. He is a member of a variety of national, state and local bar associations and the Association of Corporate Counsel. In 2006, Mr. Young helped launch the Tennessee Bar Association's Corporate Counsel Pro Bono Initiative which raised over \$120,000 in its first two years. That money has been used for grants to fund corporate counsel pro bono projects across the state which offer in-house and corporate lawyers specific pro bono opportunities tailored to their situations, skills and interests and facilitate partnerships among corporate legal departments, law firms, access to justice and other community service organizations to help meet local legal service gaps.